

**SPECIAL MEETING  
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN  
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

**July 17, 2001**

**7:00 PM**

In the absence of Mayor Baines, Chairman Cashin called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Thibault.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Gatsas, Levasseur, Sysyn, Clancy (late), Pinard, O'Neil, Lopez, Shea, Vaillancourt, Pariseau, Cashin, Thibault and Hirschmann

Chairman Cashin advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Chairman Cashin requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Robin Comstock, 889 Elm Street, Manchester stated:

I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and thank you for this opportunity to address you tonight. I am here tonight to talk to you about a branding campaign that the Chamber has organized. I would like to give you a little bit of background in a minute and then explain in further detail in the second minute. We have two committees at the Chamber of Commerce – a tourism committee and a technology committee. Simultaneously but separately from one another, both of those committees have been working on labeling, packaging and bundling their respective groups. We brought those groups together to talk about working in a collaborative fashion to select a brand that both segments of our community could use – both the technology and the non-technology related communities. The tourism community is looking to develop a lure piece or a hook piece, a tri-fold that could be mailed out of state to promote Manchester as a destination for day visits, businesses, conferences and conventions and the technology community is seeking to unify or I

should said committee is seeking to unify the industry that they represent to promote Manchester as a city to sustain technology and to bring new technology related businesses to our area. It quickly became very evident once we brought these two groups together so that they could come to meet one another, know one another and talk about their respective subject matters that this issue was, in fact, far too big for any one committee or even two committees to address. We agreed at that point in time that this endeavor should really be a very large community initiative. So tonight with your sanction we have embarked upon a community campaign that will allow all of the tenants of Manchester to participate in a branding, a labeling and a logo campaign. We hope all of the professional tenants and residents of our community and all of the residential residents and tenants will participate. In order to do so, We Do Design has designed this card and Printers Square has printed them for us as a charitable contribution. This will be dropped in our downtown area, Manchester at large, and we hope that every resident in the community of Manchester will provide their suggestions as to the brands that they would feel proud to be associated with and we hope that you will endorse our efforts. Again, with your permission I would be very pleased to provide you each with one of these cards and hope that you respond and to members of the audience. Thank you.

Estelle Tardiff, 180 Woodbury Street, Manchester stated:

I just want to tell you people that we do need the center. We go there, all of our friends and everybody. We are there three and four times a week and sometimes more. What would we do if we didn't have the center? We would only be begging our kids to take us here and there. They work all week. They can't be carting us around. This is the best thing that has ever happened to us is to have the center to play cards and have somebody our age to play with. We play bingo that we all love and everything else that we like. Thursday you can come and see us. We will have a nice dinner and be with all of the company we need and what else can we ask of life at this time in our life. We really implore you people to please take care of this center in a hurry.

Chairman Cashin asked are you referring to the West Side Senior Center.

Ms. Tardiff answered yes.

Chairman Cashin stated the West Side Center is not going to close.

Ms. Tardiff replied but I am saying we need a bigger one so we wouldn't be so crowded. A bigger center would be so much nicer. We wish that you people would come and see us sometime to see what we are all about. Thank you.

Don Welch, 147 Boutwell Street, Manchester stated:

Tonight I come before you to ask you to really look over this vote that you are going to have tonight on this parking arrangement that you have down at Singer Park. I think that a 30/70 split with 30% going to the City with the revenues from that parking lot and 70% going to the Foundation or whatever it may be down there, whatever is going on down there, that you really consider this parking shenanigans that is going on. Second of all, I want to read you a letter. This is in regards to the civic center. This was sent in by a Manchester resident who happens to be a structural engineer.

To the Honorable Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Manchester:

A story in the *Union Leader* recently identified the existence of a cracked piling at the City's Civic Center. In reading the story I could not help but recall other construction anomalies that have been the precursors to catastrophes. The collapse of the Sky Walks in Kansas City resulted in death and injury, the collapse of a building under construction in New Jersey resulted in death and injury, the recent collapse of a dance floor in Israel resulted in death and injury, and the School Collapse in Nashua this past winter are just a few catastrophic building failures where the root cause has been laid to construction anomalies.

The description of the cracked piling and its associated repair as described in the news article raised questions in my mind if the Civic Center structure was repaired to its original design strength. The repair as described may well have restored the original static strength. Does the anomaly alter the seismic or dynamic response of the structure? Does the repaired structure or building have the same resistance to damage from an earthquake or seismic event? Who bears the liability for possible future building damage contributed due to the construction anomaly? Who bears the liability of a building collapse associated with the anomaly? What other construction anomalies are associated with the Civic Center and what was there disposition?

After the most catastrophic engineering failure in the United States the Sky Walks in Kansas City, a professional review board recommended that construction anomalies be reviewed by an independent third party, removed from the original design and removed from any construction deadline pressures.

As a reminder, the construction anomaly that caused the Sky Walk's collapse was reported to be approved and acceptable by a structural engineer employed by the contractor and the project's structural engineer both of who were under pressure to meet construction deadlines. Was this not the case with the disposition of the Civic Center piling problem?

As representatives of the citizens of Manchester, your oversight of the City's Civic Center should reach beyond mere fiscal oversight. It is curious that the contractor must have known of this anomaly for some time. With the Aldermanic Civic Center committee being appraised at such a late date in the building construction they were virtually forced to accept the condition.

As a structural engineer for over thirty years, I have chosen to write to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen because the news article described the Civic Center piling anomaly as being casually disposed of with the primary focus on cost and schedule not addressing other issues.

These are pictures that none of you have ever seen before. This is the cracked piling. If this column cracks, that building is coming down. I have worked in construction. I have read this engineer's assessment of this and I think it is incumbent upon you Board members...this right here is the cracked column. This right here was the fit up that they used to restore this column. Once again, a column is different than a piling. If this column fails, that whole building comes down. There are no if's, and's or but's. I think it is incumbent upon this Board, too, to get a third independent party review of the structural anomaly that they have over there and any other ones. I will leave the letter with the Aldermen but I need the pictures back if that is possible.

William Cyr, 576 Pine Street, Manchester stated:

I am here for the purpose of the senior citizens on Hanover Street. I have been going to the center there for close to 15 years. It is a very nice place. It is enjoyed by all. A lot of us, we don't have that much to do and it is a very good let out for all of us. We don't have too many places to go and a lot of us don't drive so we can't go too far. Although I do drive, I am not crazy about and I don't go very far because of my age. If we lose that center it is going to be one heck of a let down for a lot of people. Some of the people are disabled and there is a nice ramp there that they can get in and out with. I guess I can't say it any plainer than that. We do need that center. We need it bad. Thank you.

Joan Skura, 259 Chestnut Street, Manchester stated:

I live at the O'Malley building. There are 100 apartments in there and there are about half of us that go to the Hanover Senior Center at least twice a week. We are not there always at all times. I don't know what I would do without it. My family does not live in town. In fact, only one lives in the state. The rest live in Wisconsin. I don't drive. It is walkable for me but not in the winter because of the bad snow. It is a place for me to get out of the house and not have cabin fever. Elderly people have cabin fever in the summer time too. We are tired of looking at each other. Like children in kindergarten we start arguing so if you don't have a place to go, which the center gives us...it is a new face, it is a different face. We can get down to Elm Street from Hanover Street besides. Please don't close the Hanover Street Senior Center. We really need it. We really do. Thank you very much.

Lloyd Basinow, 503 Amherst Street, Manchester stated:

I am a candidate for Welfare Commissioner in the coming election. On November 3, 1999, Welfare Commissioner Sue Lafond wrote this Board a letter in which she stated that this Board need not take any action regarding the adoption of Welfare guidelines because she was the elected Welfare Administrator and only the other towns and cities of the State had to adopt guidelines by their elected bodies. The state law clearly stated and I quote, "the local governing body as defined in RSA 672:6 of every town and city in the

state shall adopt written guidelines relative to general assistance.” You will note that Manchester was not exempted. Commissioner Lafond told me that she has her own policies and guidelines for administrating Welfare claims. I do not recall when the Commissioner suddenly became the local governing body of this City as defined in RSA 672:6. The City of Manchester is now and has been for some time in complete default of state welfare laws Chapter 165. Since this governing body has failed to adopt rules, regulations, policies and guidelines for the administration of Welfare, Manchester’s Welfare Office is acting completely illegally and subject to challenge in our courts relative to any decisions made by Commissioner Lafond or her staff. In the past this Board has taken great pleasure when is received communications from me by voting to receive and file them. Well here is another one you can receive and file. On behalf of the poor and the taxpayers of this City, I am giving this Board just 90 days to straighten this mess out and adopt a proper Welfare ordinance including guidelines, policies, rules and regulations or I am going to obtain a Superior Court Order that you will not be able to ignore. If the City Clerk would pass this on to the Mayor who is not present tonight, it is a copy of the original Susan Lafond letter to the Board. It has never been made public before and also a copy of the state laws. I would point out to everybody who has a concern in this matter that you will find of particular interest the State’s definition of a local governing body and it does not include a Welfare Commissioner even if elected. Thank you very much.

Margarita Girondi, 33 Ramsey Street, Manchester stated:

My first concern is the senior center. There are a lot of elderly people who cannot walk to the West Side and they live on the East Side and the East Side Center is easier to get to. I want that said. Another thing, the office downstairs is for the Welfare. I understand they want to close that Welfare Office. There are a lot of people who can’t get to the Welfare Office so they go to the East Side and they help them down there. That is what my concern is. It is about the elderly who cannot get around town. Unless you have transportation for them...a lot of people can’t get on the buses. I live on Ramsey Street and I can walk but a lot of people can’t. Please do not close that center. Thank you.

Theresa Dionne, 303 Laurel Street, Manchester stated:

I am here about the center. I use both, but the East Side Center is very handy for me because it is much closer than going on the West Side. The only thing I have trouble with is finding a parking space. I don’t see why the bank or somebody can’t let us use a few spaces up there. It would save walking. The activities at the Center are very good. Both sides have nice things to give us and a lot of us are alone in our houses and we like to get out with people we know. Again, don’t close the center if you don’t have to. Thank you.

Dora Tremblay, 435 Union Street, Manchester stated:

I go to both centers. I go on the West Side and I go on the East Side. The East Side is closer to my house but I still go to both and I would like to have them both going until you find someplace big enough for everyone to go to one. Thank you.

Robert Cote, 108 Glenwood Avenue, Manchester stated:

I am one of the growing list of young seniors. I am here as part of the vocal minority representing the silent majority because most seniors don't speak up. The City often asks the seniors don't ask the City what it can do for you but what can you do for your City and the seniors respond magnificently. If you don't think so, ask both hospitals. They have over 900 volunteers over there and most of them are seniors. There are many things the seniors do. I think when it comes to voting they probably have the highest percentage and a lot of you people don't know it but the fastest growing section of our population is seniors over 100. Now if you retire at 65 and you live to be 100, you need a place to go. I am 65 now and I don't use it as much as a lot of them but when I am 85 I will probably use it a lot. We have to build something. We brag about this City being dynamic and all of that. We have to build something, but in the meantime please keep both centers open. Many seniors can't make it to the West Side and if they do make it they can't park and they can't get into the building. I was there the other day to check it out. If you are thinking about closing one while you build another one and the wheels turn slowly and it takes you two years to build an adequate facility, you better keep them both open. Let's face it. You don't want the seniors revolting in this town. We have enough problems. So, keep the seniors happy. It may cost a few bucks but in comparison to the civic center, the new center is very small money. A lot of seniors need both places. Let's give them a break. You get a lot from your seniors. Give them a lot in return. Thank you.

George Lajoie, 170 Taylor Street, Manchester stated:

I am aware that there are many factors in deciding on a place for the senior center. Your past decisions have ended up with let's wait and see. Whether you live on the East Side or the West Side, if a center is built on the East or West side, there is one important factor that the seniors agree on and that is there should be accessible parking with little or no cost. Both the West Side and Hanover Street sites have parking as major problems. When we needed a place to play darts, you set us up in a youth center on Maple Street. You recently sent us to JFK Coliseum for shuffleboard. That has worked out well, but is only temporary. We will be displaced when hockey begins. You have the opportunity to take advantage of the Maple Street Teamster's Hall. It would be a site that we could use for all activities, not for just cards but having to go from one temporary place to another. It is a site that would meet our needs. It is not expensive and it has plenty of parking. You have delayed making a decision because you think you should wait and see because there was a possibility that maybe you could find land at the river. Is the land suitable?

How long will we have to wait and see? There are a lot of maybe's, possibilities and wait and sees. I suggest that you buy the Maple Street site now and if something comes up in later years you certainly could sell it and easily get your money back. If you buy it, we will build on it. We will make repairs and additions. A lot of seniors have the experience. We need room for everything, not just cards but darts and shuffleboard. Please don't let us wait and see. Seniors don't have the luxury of waiting. How long can we wait with the good Lord waiting over our shoulders? Please work something out now. No more wait and see. Thank you.

Lionel Leblanc, 23 Belmont Street, Manchester stated:

I am here tonight for only one reason and that is to impress on the Mayor and Aldermen the need for a senior center. The place should be built at Singer Park. It is a good location because with the building we would have a large parking lot. It is accessible from the four cardinal points. We are along in years and we need a place where we can congregate. For once, why don't you take care of the seniors by building us a senior center? We are the pioneers and the early settlers in the City. I as a property owner have paid taxes for 53 years. It is about time a senior center is build before we demise. This does not pertain to the four Aldermen who have supported the Singer site. The decision is yours tonight to make. Decide what is best for the elderly citizens of Manchester. You need us at election time. We vote as a block. Lose us in the vote and you will lose the election when you are up for re-election. Thank you.

Chairman Cashin recessed the meeting to allow the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to meet.

Chairman Cashin called the meeting back to order.

Glenn Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, Manchester stated:

For all of the money we spent for the civic center, which I favor, I have always favored the civic center, there are problems with it but I favor it, I think the senior citizens well deserve a senior citizen center. My major topic tonight happens to be parking. As I said I have favored the civic center since its inception in 1990/1991 when they first started working on it but a lot of wasted funds have been spent in the early 90's on this project. Today I am proud of the civic center building that is there and I am definitely hoping that the report that was given earlier by the contractor is looked into. That would be a say fact if something were to happen. I am also proud that we are going to have a new hockey team and football team. I think that is all positive for the City of Manchester, but you have created chaos with parking. You did not think of parking before putting in the civic center. You had 12 locations to put the civic center in and you chose one without parking. There is a large piece of land on the side of the civic center, which now stands

empty and you have put partial parking and even grass there. You filled up a hole that was four stories deep. You could have put a four story parking garage there and at least got 500 cars parked there. You could have taken out a bond and it could have been paid for by those who used the parking garage. I am really upset because you guys met twice in the last two months on parking in residential areas. Auburn Street on the corner of Chestnut and Pine was not allocated for parking. It has been illegal to park on even sides there for over 100 years. Now you are putting parking even though you have never voted for it. I want to know why parking is going on a street that you the Board of Mayor and Aldermen have never voted on. Thank you.

Robert St. Pierre, 47 Morgan Street, Manchester stated:

I am a registered voter and I also play shuffleboard. Now over the last five or six summers I have enjoyed playing in Kolivas Park on courts unfortunately shared with rollerbladers, bicyclists, motorcyclists and pigeons. I am not complaining. Kolivas was a good start, but limited to daytime fair weather play. As you know, the Kolivas courts are now gone so this summer season other senior citizens and I have been playing shuffleboard inside the JFK Coliseum on the rink surface closest to the Maple Street entrance. The Parks & Recreation Department has fenced off roughly 10-15% of the surface for that purpose and they have purchased two roll-up regulation courts that are 1,000% better than the Kolivas Park courts. The biggest plus is that the game is now played inside rather than outside. However, these accommodations are seasonal only. As you know, the Coliseum is an ice palace roughly half the year. Also, the other 80% to 90% of the surface is used for youth activities in the off season and although most seniors understand the exuberance of kid...I have seven of my own and nineteen grandchildren, nonetheless we would prefer somewhat older company when shuffling. That brings us to the subject of this hearing. You are proposing a new senior center somewhere. Personally I don't care where it is because I will get there. However, I would like to see something inside and if you were to do that the present equipment that has been purchased by Parks & Recreation could merely be moved. You don't have to buy anything and all we need is a space. My final remark is this. Elderly taxpayers enjoy the moderate physical exercise necessary to play shuffleboard every day, every week, every month and every season of the year. Thank you for your patience.

Billy Dodd, 181 Mammoth Road, Manchester stated:

As you all know, I am a candidate for Alderman in Ward 6. First of all, I would like to take a second and for those of you who will not be coming back as Aldermen next year I would like to thank you for your service and your dedication. It took a lot of effort and I thank you. In talking with some people in Ward 6, you heard the civic center brought up about the cracked piling and one gentleman brought up the idea why didn't the City hire a construction clerk to oversee everything over there. We don't know what the expenses



are over there right now. It would have been like a cheap insurance policy. The other thing is Mission Avenue. The poor people on Mission Avenue would like to have their street paved. They have all the other services, but they would like to have it paved. Stop making them jump through hoops. You guys take the initiative and the City should do it. Finagle the bagel. A gentleman brought that idea up at Dunkin Donuts the other day and he brought it up because of the Bridge Street and Elm Street corner lot and he wants to know how the bagel is going to be sliced up so the City gets the least amount of the deal. I said you mean like the civic center parking revenue and how the City entered into an agreement in May of 1997, a year and a half before we went to the polls to vote on the civic center? That bagel was cut up pretty thin. Or the Chase Block. A building that is valued at \$2.5 million right now but before construction was even started this Board authorized a purchase and sales agreement in 15 years for \$100,000 to a corporation. How did that bagel get sliced? The Rubenstein lot. You have heard about that one. We constructed it but we are only getting 70% of the revenue? In part of the Mayor's budget, the Police Department has to write somewhere near \$90,000 worth of parking tickets to contribute to the parking revenues to the management company of the civic center. The bagel getting cut pretty thin here. Again, there are going to be four new Aldermen next year and hopefully the people of Ward 6 will make it five. Thank you.

Kathleen Sims, 302 Orange Street, Manchester stated:

I am here because I have concerns about the noise levels from the concert series at Singer Park. There have been three concerts so far this summer and they have all been extraordinarily loud. It sounds like someone is putting huge speakers outside my bedroom window. It is really annoying. I find that it has been under reported in the paper. The Police Department routinely says that the noise is not a problem but it is. They under report the number of calls they get. There has been only one reporter in the *Union Leader* who has taken the matter seriously and his name is Mark Hayward and we really appreciate him. I have called the Mayor's Office about this problem. I have been shuffled around to several different aides, as well as to Parks & Recreation, which has nothing to do with it, and I was at last told that I needed to contact my Aldermen to see about getting a noise ordinance passed. I understand that the concerts are good for Manchester, I guess, but it would be nice if the volume could be moderated. Just a little volume control would be great so that we can actually sleep tonight, the people who actually live in Manchester and have to get up and go to work in the morning. Thank you.

Danny Sims, 303 Orange Street, Manchester stated:

I also have a concern about the noise levels from the concerts. This year there have been as you know three concerts and as you heard they have all been very, very loud. If there would be an ordinance for the level of noise or perhaps the time that these concerts occur

so that when people are trying to sleep they are not being blasted out of their beds or they don't have to close their windows on a hot summer night, I think that could be a happy medium that could be struck between the people who want the concerts and the people who want to live in Manchester. Thank you.

Chairman Cashin advised that there being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Thibault, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk